



Savannah Film Commission
2012 Annual Report

Savannah Film Office Mission

The mission of the Savannah Film Office is to weave the film and television industry into the fabric of Savannah's social, economic and professional profile. We are committed to providing professional assistance to clients and citizens in an effort to build a sustainable media industry in the Savannah area.

Coordination

The primary function of the Film Office is to manage media projects that are produced in the Savannah area. This includes coordinating, permitting and monitoring projects that are utilizing or affecting public property. This service is valuable to the productions as well as to all those who may be impacted by production activity. These efforts extend beyond Savannah city limits and into surrounding counties. Aspects of coordination include the factors detailed below.

Public Safety

Media production activities are coordinated and permitted so as not to endanger the general public. Permits are specific to each project and outline what activities are allowed and not allowed. Certain permits require that police, fire or EMT personnel be on set, paid by the production company. This is coordinated through the Film Office.

There have been no reported accidents or injuries associated with permitted activities since the Film Office was established in 1995.

Liability and Insurance

Proper permitting protects the City from liability due to loss on public property. Permits include uniform indemnity language and insurance requirements. Some activities merit additional language and increased insurance coverage. Identifying these special cases is a priority.

There have been no claims against the City since the Film Office was opened in 1995.

Quality of Life

Location filming has the potential to be disruptive. The Film Office considers each project individually to assess how it can be completed with the least amount of disruption. Most permits require that written notification be distributed to residents and businesses in the affected area so that citizens know what to expect. This allows citizens to contact us with questions or concerns before filming activities begin. Active coordination minimizes citizen complaints.

Our office received ten citizen complaints in 2012. Seven of these resulted from the permit violations of a single company. The remaining three were logistical in nature and were resolved.

Coordinating with Other Entities

Media projects can be complex and often cross geographic and jurisdictional lines. This necessitates coordination with county, state and federal agencies as well as other municipalities, private property owners, associations and institutions.

Providing a one stop shop for such needs is valuable to clients and locals because it creates an efficient and consistent process with clear lines of communication and accountability. This also eliminates the need for neighboring municipalities to carry duplicate capacity.

Marketing & Recruitment

Another key function of the Film Office is to increase media related spending and exposure through the recruitment of media productions to the area.

Marketing

These efforts are broad in scope and intended to generate leads. Outreach includes industry trade shows, website, social media, advertising and the development of key relationships. Our focus is to keep those who specialize in finding locations fully aware of what Savannah has to offer. By maintaining these personal relationships, we keep Savannah fresh in the minds of potential clients without reliance on a large advertising budget.

Producers rely on the experience and recommendations of their peers above any marketing or advertising message. Our most powerful marketing tool is a satisfied client.

Recruitment

Recruitment efforts begin when a specific project with potential is identified. Each effort is unique because each project has a unique set of needs. We begin with detailed conversations about the project's location, logistical and economic needs. This is typically followed with location scouting, research and presentations. Larger productions require detailed site visits and meetings.

Each client should feel that their project is our top priority. This can be very time consuming, but it builds a reputation of quality service.

When done well, the recruitment process itself creates a positive impression on a client. Even if the project at hand doesn't work out, they will consider Savannah again.

Supporting Local Production

Locally produced content can provide a more sustainable employment footprint relative to transient projects. Though this can be challenging in a market of our size, local production companies and producers continue to make progress.

In addition to our normal services, we provide local producers with technical assistance, advice and promotion. We do not, however, get involved in fundraising activities.

This support for local endeavors includes partnerships with The Savannah Film Festival, The 48 Hour Film Festival, Mountain Film Savannah and the Savannah Arts Academy Film Festival.

"Enchanted Amore" Director Ruediger Von Spies discussed his Savannah experience with Director Joel David Moore during a location scout for "Killing Winston Jones."



(Joel David Moore, Jody Schiesser, Ruediger Von Spies, Jay Self)



Trends and Issues

Tax Incentives

Georgia incentives decreased as other state incentives increased.

Georgia incentives decreased in 2012 with the elimination of the **Point of Purchase Sales Tax Exemption**. Provisions of the core *Tax Credit* incentive were modified, but not specifically reduced. The effects of these changes are not yet known.

North Carolina has introduced a significant Tax Rebate program which is extremely competitive with Georgia. This will strengthen Wilmington, NC, a natural competitor with significant resources and infrastructure.

Economic Climate

Savannah realized a dramatic increase in advertising production, outpacing the national growth rate of 2.4%. The entertainment industry continues to experience fundamental change. Film saw growth in the \$1-5 million budget range as did Savannah.

Infrastructure

Significant Feature and Television projects require industry specific infrastructure. Efforts to enable private investment in such infrastructure continued throughout 2012.

Recruitment Capacity

Marketing may generate leads, but it will not, in itself, generate business. Business is generated through effective recruitment of specific projects.

Choosing the location for a film project is a critical and complex business decision based on a matrix of objective and subjective requirements unique for each project. Effective recruitment efforts require time and resources. An insufficient effort will likely lose the project at hand and deter the client from considering Savannah in the future. Generating more interest than we can properly service will have a compounded negative effect.

The number of Feature Film projects being actively recruited has risen steadily for the past four years. The current level of interest is nearing the top end of our service capacity.

Future growth will require an increase in recruitment and coordination capacity.

Project Monitoring and Permit Enforcement

Citizen complaints rose to the highest level since the office opened in 1995. Yet, if you separate those related to one project, the number is lower than previous years and at a rate of **<1 per \$4 million of direct** spend which is well below our performance goal.

The unauthorized use of public and private property and repeated permit violation by one project generated more citizen complaints in two weeks than the combined projects for any previous year since the Film Office opened. Unfortunately, this company refused to comply with Film Office efforts to resolve these problems. This necessitated constant monitoring which consumed over 360 additional man hours, with a relative cost of over \$14,800.

The Film Office has a strong reputation of protecting the rights and needs of citizens when permitting projects. This results in location access. Allowing inappropriate behavior erodes community support and closes doors to future productions.

Outside political pressure should not interfere with the ability of the Film Office to enforce permit conditions, rules and agreements.

Optimizing Local Impact

Film Office assets provide neutral, dynamic, and industry trusted platforms where producers can get up to date and concise information on local resources. This is critical for project recruitment efforts. It also enhances impact by connecting producers with local crew, talent, businesses and service providers.

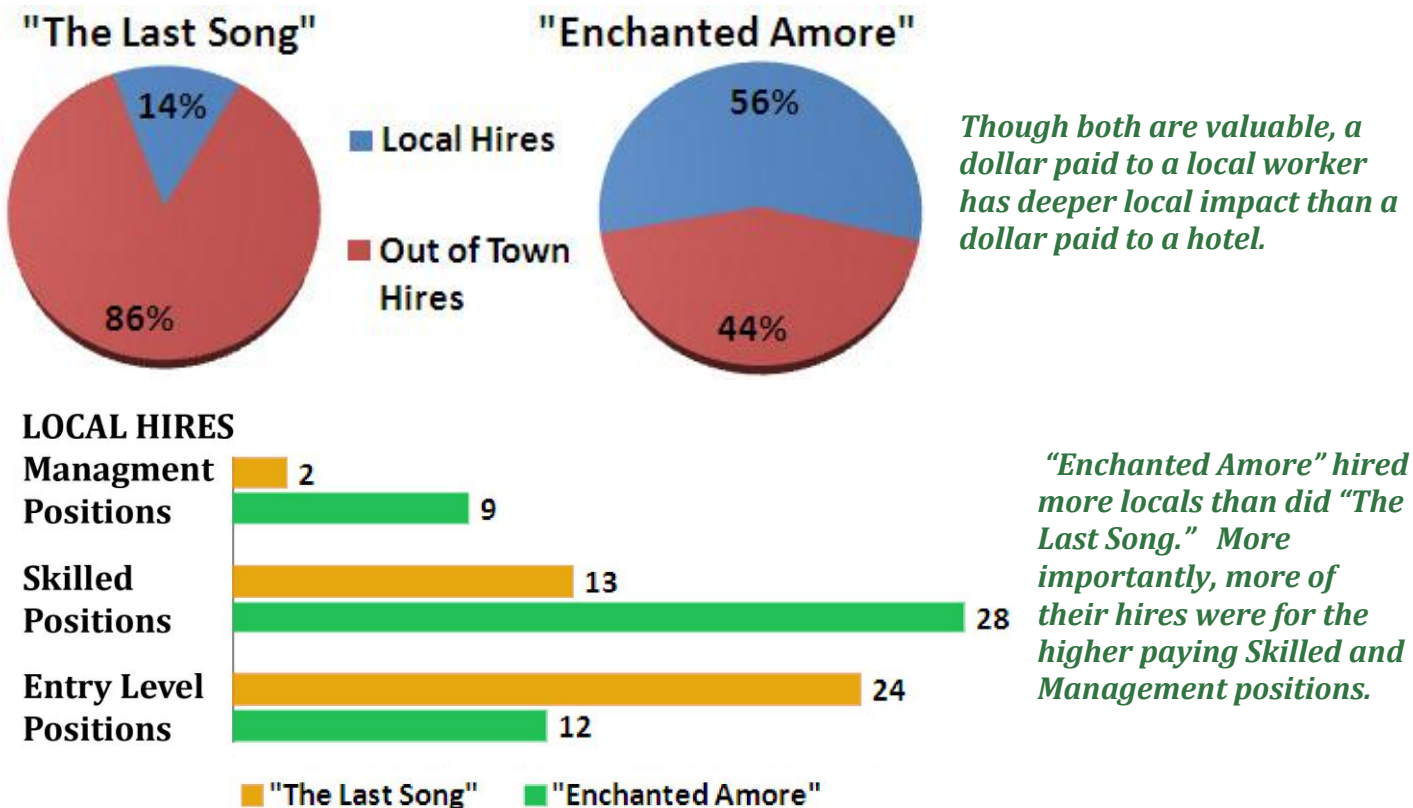
- Over 300 local professionals and businesses have listings in our **Crew and Services Directory**. This is an important tool in both marketing and in maximizing local involvement.
- Over 3000 people follow our social media postings. This is second only to Visit Savannah among regional economic development entities.

Bigger is not always Better

Large budget films may get significant media attention, but the data shows that smaller productions can bring higher rates of local impact.

High budget projects tend to import the majority of their labor based on established relationships, especially for the higher paid skilled and management positions. Lower budget projects tend to avoid the travel and per diem costs of imported labor, relying instead on local hires and resources.

The *"Last Song"* had a crew of 270 and a budget of over \$30 million. *"Enchanted Amore"* had a crew of 87 and a budget of less than \$2 million. They shot for approximately the same number of days. The pay rates for production positions were comparable.



Closing Deals on Feature Films

It takes many successful recruitment efforts to land a single production.

Most feature film projects are unfunded during the recruitment phase. Each year, we 'close the deal' on projects that never go into production for reasons outside of our control. There is no way to predict which projects will be made so we must put effort into all opportunities.

On average, half of the projects we actively recruit will never get to the point of making a location decision. Of those that do, up to half will choose Savannah. The majority of these will never go into production.

Production Highlights

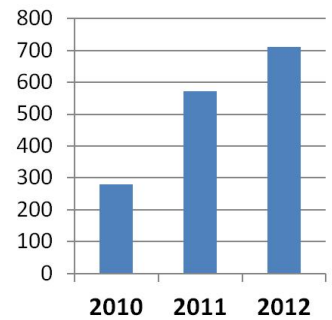
2012 brought the highest number of projects, local employment and local spending our area has ever seen. Increased impact was evident in all categories. On average, there were two projects shooting on any given day in 2012.

Feature Films

Of all the project categories, feature films generate the most public interest. Savannah hosted a record nine feature projects in 2012. Of these, seven had significant impact. As you will see, production was spread throughout the year.

Feature work started in early January as **“Breaking at the Edge”** (shooting title **“When the Bough Breaks”**) resumed filming.

Total Shooting Days
for Assisted Projects

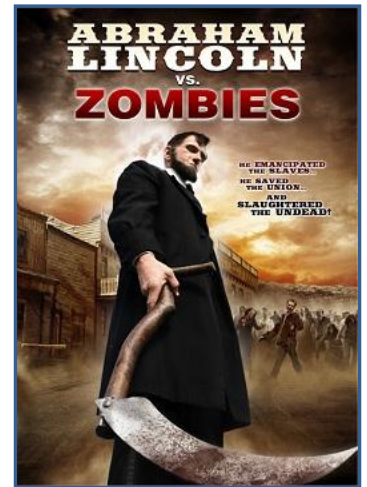


Tim Gill (DP) and Jody Schiesser (AD) on set at Fort Pulaski



“Abraham Lincoln Vs. Zombies” shot in January and February. This project was low in budget yet high in opportunity. All but three positions were filled with local hires including Director of Photography, First Assistant Director and Production Designer. The cast was also dominated by local actors. This provided a valuable opportunity for local professionals to move up in their craft.

It also fulfilled the secret dream of many locals to be in a zombie movie.

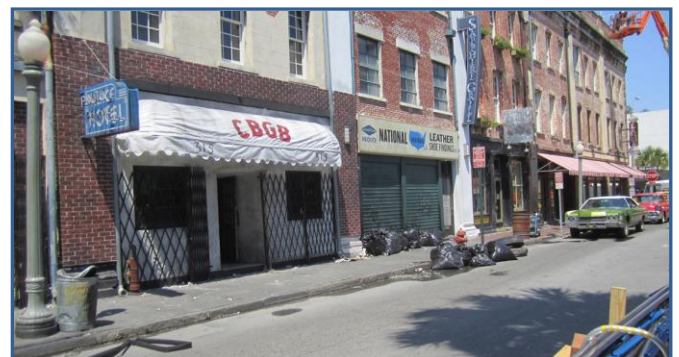


“The city of Savannah rose up as one to help us get this movie made, and it was a sight to behold. Your energy, your creativity and your generosity is what made this movie possible. People opened their hearts and their homes to us, and I still have no idea why. But I’m glad you did!”

- Richard Schenkman, Director

The art department of **“CBGB”** added graffiti, litter and other touches to transform Savannah into New York’s Bowery District of the 1970’s. The results were convincing for this film about the iconic music club.

The project used local resources and shot throughout the City during June and July.



Producer Solila Parida first brought **“Desires of the Heart”** to the Film Office in 2004. Production began over the summer with locals filling most positions including Director. Many of these crew members traveled to India to shoot the scenes set in Rajasthan.

“The opportunity to direct the international feature film “Desires of the Heart” here in Savannah was extraordinary. While many aspire to be full-time professionals in the film industry, Savannah is fortunate to have many citizens who earn their living in this field.”

- **James Kicklighter**
Director, “Desires of the Heart”



Local James Kicklighter directing a scene.



Locals Bobbie Harley, Nikita Carpenter, Tim Gill and Angelique Chase filled key positions on “Desires of the Heart.”



The crew of “Enchanted Amore” on location in Bryan County.



Ruediger Von Spies (center) reviews a scene with local AC Zach Graber (left).

“Enchanted Amore” Producer Ulli Lommel and Director Ruediger Von Spies found exactly what they needed in Savannah. These veterans of German and American Cinema recognized the quality of our local crew and talent and utilized both throughout their project.

“The Sacrament,” directed by Ti West, received little public attention while shooting in October and November. This was by design and important to the story concept. It was no secret to the many locals who worked as crew and actors on this thriller.



SAA students worked with the film’s art department to transform their school into the fictional Maywood Jr. High for “Killing Winston Jones.”



The year ended with **“Killing Winston Jones.”** Director Joel David Moore found the right combination of location and cooperation for this dark comedy at the Savannah Arts Academy. A large number of local professionals worked on both sides of the camera including students from a wide range of schools. This was an ambitious project that relied heavily on Film Office assistance.



SAA Principle Gif Lockley with KWJ Director Joel David Moore

The film’s producer summed up his experience to the **Savannah Morning News:**

“The people in the Film Office here truly understand the challenges we face as filmmakers. Our experience has been so positive that we are considering Savannah as a hub for future film and media productions.”

- **Albert Sandoval**, CEO, RadioactiveGiant

Television

Savannah hosted 24 television projects in 2012. These ranged from Reality TV Pilots, Cooking & Travel shows, to a full network season. All had two things in common: They intend to show Savannah to a national audience and needed Film Office assistance to succeed.

Notable Projects:



Country Music Television's series **"Southern Nights"** made Savannah home for their 2012 season. This house based reality show shot throughout Savannah 24 hours a day, seven days a week during the months of February and March.

Though shows like this can be disruptive, especially in a residential neighborhood, proper planning, permitting and coordination resulted in a happy production company and happy neighbors.



Bravo

Bravo's upcoming series **"Newlyweds: The First Year"** shot their first episode here in January and April. The wedding took place at the historic Harper Fowlkes House.



"Adam Richman's Best Sandwich in America" honored local eatery **Zunzi's** when their sandwich the Chicken Conquistador was named best sandwich in the South and second best in the nation.

Owner Gabriella DeBeer is pictured here showing Adam how her signature sandwich is made.

Richman has featured Savannah 3 times in the past 2 years.

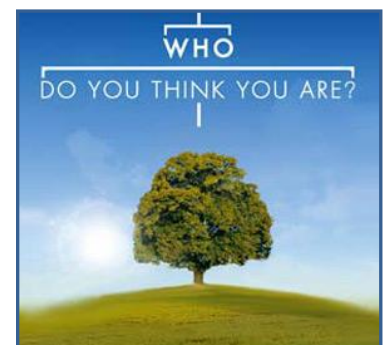


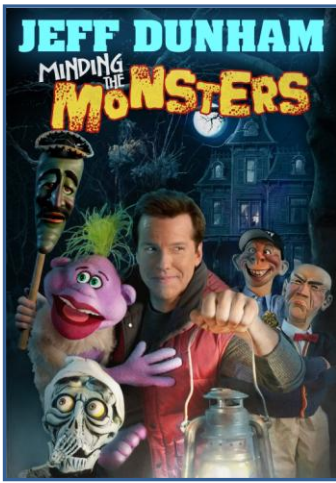
"Many Rivers to Cross:

A History of the African American People"

chronicles the African American experience from the early 1500's to the present. Savannah will be featured in this eight-part series from WNET set to air on PBS.

"Who Do You Think You Are" produced an episode on Paula Deen, and the Deen brothers were busy with numerous shows including a Thanksgiving Special.





"Minding the Monsters,"

comedian Jeff Dunham's holiday special for Comedy Central, was recorded at the Lucas Theater.



"The Bad Girls Club"

made a road trip to Savannah for an episode of the Oxygen Network's Atlanta based reality show.



"The Royal Pains"

needed a coastal location and the Film Office found

them numerous options including the St. Simon's Island locations that were used. The project utilized many Savannah people and resources. Like "X-Men," we work to get projects as close to Savannah as possible. This support has resulted in the show selecting Savannah as a shooting location for 2013.

CNN brought "Launching of the Lanterns"

to Tybee Island as a memorial to a fallen soldier.



"American Ride" and

"Jewish Bikers" rolled into town for episodes on Savannah. Jewish Bikers shot scenes at Mickve Israel.



**Other 2012
clients
included:**



Multi Media

"The Needle in the Blade of Grass"

(AKA : "The Missing Kids Project") is a multi-dimensional project from acclaimed British artist Jason Armstrong Beck. Set in Savannah, this story of a family in the aftermath of discovering their youngest daughter has gone missing is designed to benefit organizations dealing with the issue of missing children.

Featuring local cast and crew, this project will be exhibited in New York, London, Berlin and Los Angeles.

This project will continue shooting into 2013.

THE NEEDLE IN THE BLADE OF GRASS



Advertising

Savannah hosted 23 advertising projects in 2012. These commercial and photography campaigns ranged from the Law Enforcement products of regional **Daniel Defense** to the multi platform international ad campaign for **Express**.

Notable Projects:



Louis Vuitton used Wormsloe as the backdrop for their 2013 Spring Collection.



department stores
had 3 crews shooting
simultaneously for
three weeks preparing
for their upcoming
Spring Catalog.



California's **Silver Oak** Winery
photographed their iconic tower in
front of numerous Savannah icons.

SILVER OAK



ELLE



ST. Joseph's/Candler



Savannah joined an exclusive list when **Express** brought their "**Rock the Sidewalk**" event to our city. This week long event culminated in the debut of their **2012 Holiday Collection** at a live runway show on Gordon Street near Monterey Square.

This effort was invasive, though neighbors were supportive because their needs were addressed from the very beginning and the production company operated within the conditions of their permit.



"Working with you and your team was truly one of the best experiences I have had."

Tahira White,
Production Manager

The images and video gathered over this period were used in an international multi platform advertising campaign. The catalogues alone went to 12 million homes in North America. The production spent over \$900,000 while in Savannah. The value of the advertising exposure is much greater.



Here is an excerpt from a letter to the editor from someone who understands the value of such marketing:

"... Savannah was again doing things that it has never done before, just like the Rock 'n Roll Marathon and the Tall Ships Festival. And the energy, action and excitement truly did transform Monterey Square into something straight out of Manhattan, Toronto or Paris.

Thanks to the city and the hard work of the Savannah Film Commission. Their efforts continue to bring new opportunities to Savannah."

Joseph Marinelli,
President, Visit Savannah

EXPRESS

July 19, 2012

Mayor Edna Jackson
P.O. Box 1027
Savannah, GA 31402

Dear Madam Mayor,

On behalf of Express, I would like to formally thank the city of Savannah for being such a gracious host to our Holiday 2012 Runway Show and photo shoot. In particular, I would like to recognize the amazing partnership we received from the Savannah Film Commission, and its Film Services Director, Jay Self.

Jay was instrumental in not only the production of the event, but also in the subsequent community and media outreach. We owe much of our success to him, and I wish there was a "Jay Self" in every city we shoot in!

We are very pleased with the results of the shoot and are excited to share your beautiful city in our 600+ stores, express.com and millions of catalogs this Holiday season.

Warmly,

Jennifer Bayley
Jennifer Bayley
Express Public Relations

RECEIVED
JUL 24 2012
Mayor's Office-City of Savannah

Short Features

The Film Office assisted 13 short feature projects in 2012. All but one of these were from Savannah based producers.

"C6-10" was a local project at every level. Key Grip Robert Duvall is pictured here on location.

Music Videos

Savannah hosted 6 music video shoots in 2012 featuring local and international artists.



Polish superstar **Karolina Kozak** and crew traveled to Savannah to shoot a video for her work **"Homemade."**



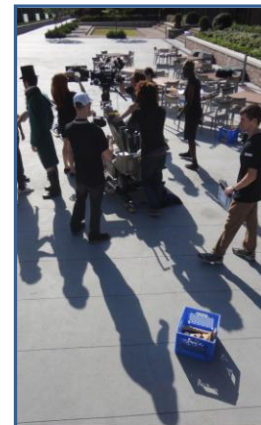
Student Films

The number of student films continues to increase. The Film Office assisted 160 different projects, a 42% increase over 2011. Two of these were AASU projects. All others were SCAD projects.

Producer Mil Cannon (*Crackerjack*) returned to Savannah to shoot **"Sheets Down"** in Daffin Park.



These projects can be as complex as professional productions. The potential for accidents, liability and complaints is magnified by the inexperience of student producers. In an effort to avoid such problems, we work closely with students and professors including speaking to classes on safe location filming practices.



Students fill every role on these projects. Graduate Student Alex Harris Was the AD for "Passing Through Traveling Down" (above) and Producer for "Antebellum" (right).



Graduate Student Jane Barr produced **"Lord Olivier"** which utilized numerous locations.

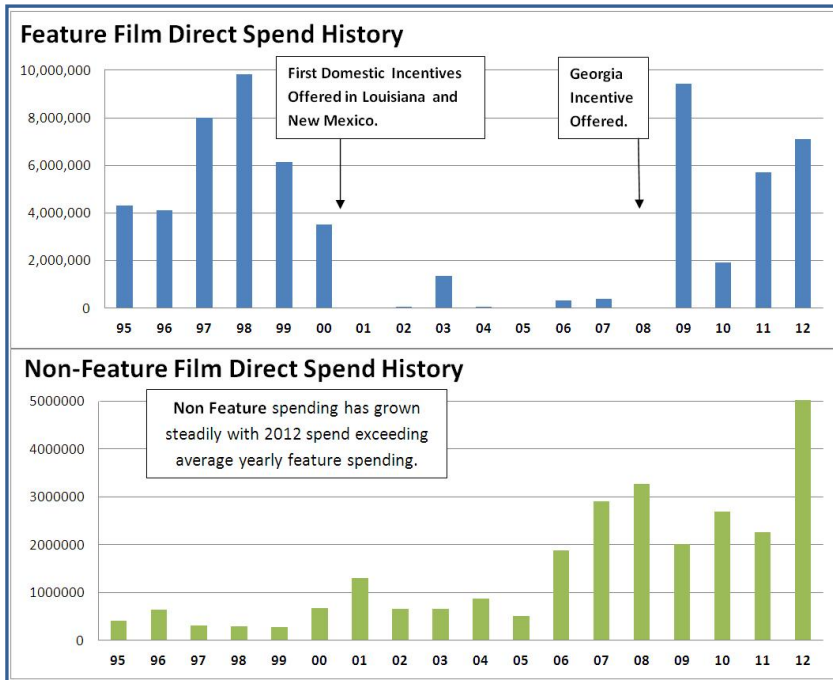
Sustainability

Our goal is to reach and maintain a level of production activity that can provide the consistent opportunities needed to support a workforce and vendors for the long term.

2012 brought the highest number of projects, local employment and local spending our area has ever seen. Growth was realized through:

- Increased number of productions
- Maximizing the local impact of these productions through higher rates of local involvement.

To remain sustainable, growth must not outpace capacity. Current production levels are within local capacity and there is room for growth. However, rapid growth can be counterproductive.



Many cities, including Atlanta and Savannah, have experienced “Boom and Bust” in the Feature Film area.

Media production is extremely mobile. This enables rapid growth potential. It also enables rapid decline potential.

A significant negative shift, often referred to as **‘Burnout,’** can be triggered by a number of causes, but the effects are similar and well documented: an unemployed workforce and idle vendors & infrastructure.

Non-Feature Film productions, such as advertising, television and local productions are less likely to be effected by these factors. They can provide a more stable employment base than feature films.

Burnout – Contributing factors

Economics – Increase in Production Costs

Among the possible threats:

- Decrease or Loss of State Tax Incentives
- Increased Labor Costs
- Increased Location or Permit Fees
- Emergence of a Cheaper Alternative

Locations – Decrease in Availability

Savannah has a wealth of locations, but they are finite.

- Over exposure of key locations can result in an industry perception that *“its all been shot already.”*
- Over use of key locations can cause the owners, public and private, to limit or deny access.

Local Cooperation – Shift in public opinion that causes decreased cooperation.

Our community is ‘film friendly,’ meaning we are willing to accommodate the inconveniences caused by location filming. This attitude is based on value.

- On one side you have the common benefits these projects bring to our community.
- On the other side you have the specific inconveniences they cause.
- As the level of production rises, so do the number of specific inconveniences.
- If these outpace the perceived benefits, the attitude will shift and cooperation will be effected.

Savannah’s relative size, unique look and lack of local content buyers increases our susceptibility to burnout. As we plan for the future, it is important that we maintain practical expectations.

Economics

About This Report:

Our goal is to accurately calculate the economic impact of projects enabled by the Film Office.

Scope:

The figures in this report are based solely on data from projects that received Film Office assistance.

We **DO NOT** include data for media projects that did not require assistance such as:

- Most Local Production and Advertising Company Activity
- Most Student Projects
- Venue Specific Activities
 - Civic Center, Trade Center . . .
 - Lucas, Trustees and Savannah Theater . . .
- Government Programming
- Studio Based Programming
 - Meddin, Comcast, SCAD, Doll House, 3180 Media Group . . .
- News Gathering & Programming

Though these projects benefit from Film Office efforts, there is no reasonable way to gather reliable information on such projects.

Therefore, the actual value of Media Production in our community is higher than this report can validate.

Definitions:

Shooting Days

This is a uniformed measure of production activity that can be compared from year to year. It measures the number of days a project was actually shooting in our area. It does not include pre-production or post-production activities because these are different for each project, and therefore not a reliable comparative.

- For **Professional Productions**, we calculate all local shooting days of the assisted project.
- For **Student Productions**, we calculate only those shooting days that required permits or specific assistance relating to public locations.

Direct Local Spend

This is the amount of money paid directly to local individuals and businesses by assisted projects. This information is provided by project producers. When not made available, we utilize the *Association of Film Commissioners International "PRODUCTION REVENUE TRACKING GUIDELINES: Direct Spending For On-Location Production – US"* to determine spending. To ensure accuracy, we compare the guideline figures with known figures of comparable projects. The guideline numbers prove accurate with few exceptions. When an exception is identified, the figures are modified in order to reflect actual spending.

Economic Impact

When a dollar enters a community it is spent a number of times before leaving that community. Each of these transactions has a positive impact on that local economy, including tax generation. "Economic Impact" is the cumulative value of these transactions.

Economists examine a broad range of data in order to formulate **multipliers** for a specific industry in a specific geographic area. For instance, a dollar spent on gasoline will move out of a community at a different rate than one paid as a wage. State and Local multipliers are not comparable because a dollar may move out of a city and still remain in the state, so they use different multipliers.

We use a conservative multiplier of **2.12**. It is based on a statistical model developed specifically for Savannah by Dr. Dan Rickman of Georgia Southern University. This is more accurate than using a national, state or industry average rate.

This report DOES NOT include or calculate the exposure value these projects produce or the subsequent tourism and business activities they generate.

2012 Statistics

Professional Productions	Student Productions	2012 Totals
Projects: 82	Projects: 160	242
Shooting Days: 431	Shooting Days: 284	715
Local Spend: \$11,978,550	Local Spend: \$298,191	\$12,276,741
Citizen Complaints: 10	Citizen Complaints: 0	10
Accidents: 0	Accidents: 0	0
City Liability: 0	City Liability: 0	0

Category	Projects	Shooting Days	Direct Local Spending
Feature Film	9	158	\$7,150,000
Television	24	92	\$1,602,500
Commercial	7	20	\$1,227,500
Still Photography	16	102	\$1,760,050
Short Feature	13	36	\$58,500
Music Video	6	14	\$85,000
Corporate	4	4	\$42,500
Documentary	1	2	\$30,000
Student Films	160	284	\$298,191
Other	2	3	\$22,500
Total	242	715	\$12,276,741
Multiplier			2.12
Total Economic Impact			\$26,026,690

* This report does not include data from the "Royal Pains" project, though it was recruited to the GA coast by the Film Office and utilized many Savannah area resources.

Summary

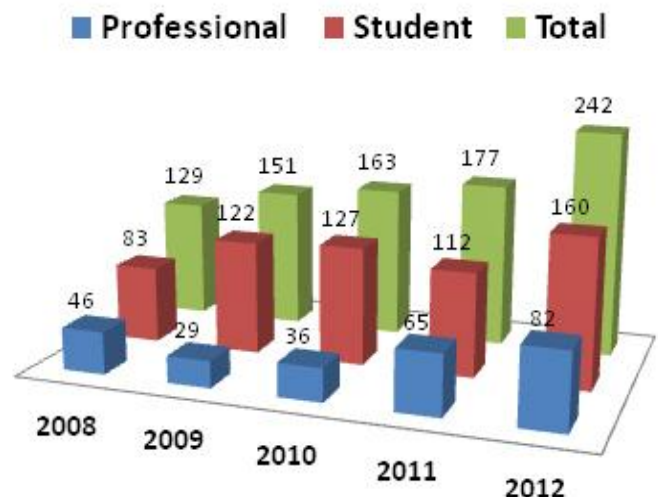
2012 brought the highest number of projects, local employment and local spending our area has ever seen.

Direct Local Spend: **\$12,276,741**

Local Economic Impact: **\$26,026,690**

- On average, there were 2 projects shooting on any given day in 2012.
- Increased impact was evident in all project categories.
- Total and Project Average Hiring Rates were greater than in any previous year.
- Hiring growth occurred in higher paying Management and Skilled positions.
- If the steady increase of Assisted Projects continues, The Film Office will require additional resources in order to maintain current service levels.

Assisted Projects



Savannah Film Commission

The Savannah Film Commission is charged with advising and assisting the Savannah Film Office and Savannah City Council on filming related issues and activities. Members are appointed by the Mayor and Aldermen and represent a wide range of stakeholders including industry professionals, civic leaders, and business and neighborhood representatives.

This group of dedicated citizen volunteers plays a vital leadership role in a wide range of issues and activities in support of the Film Office Mission and City Council Priorities.

Mr. Michael Jarema, **Chairman**

Mr. Tommy Holland, **Vice-Chairman**

Ms. Rebecca Gnann, **Secretary**

Ms. Sue Adler

Mr. Francis Allen

Mr. Christopher Barbieri

Mr. Dana Braun

Mr. Bailey Davidson

Mrs. Carol Fogarty

Mr. Stratton Leopold

Mr. Joseph Marinelli

Mrs. Beth Nelson

Mr. James M. Reed

Mrs. Sandi Reese

Mr. David Rousseau

Mr. Murray Silver

Mr. Ken Sirlin

Dr. R. L. Stevenson

Mr. Bill Stuebe